

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ALGIER 02725 071010Z

13

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 EUR-12 NEA-06 ISO-00 INT-05 COME-00

TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 /041 W

----- 119516

R 061730Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1525

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 2725

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AG, MO, SS

SUBJ: ALGERIAN PLANS FOR GARA DJEBILET

REF: ALGIERS 2724

1. REFTTEL INDICATES THAT BOUMEDIENE PLANS TO PUSH FORWARD WITH UNILATERAL EXPLOITATION OF GARA DJEBILET IRON DEPOSITS WITHOUT WAITING FOR CONDITIONS TO PERMIT EXPLOITATION OF IRON DEPOSITS BY ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN MIXED COMPANY CREATED TWO YEARS AGO. ALGERIAN LONG-TERM ECONOMIC PLANS CALL FOR CONSTRUCTION OF TEN MILLION TON STEEL FACTORY IN ORAN-MOSTAGANEM AREA TO BE SUPPLIED BY GARA DJEBILET ORE.

2. IN THEORY, ALGERIAN PLANS DO NOT NECESSARILY CONFLICT WITH THEIR AGREEMENT WITH MOROCCO WHICH SPECIFIES EXPLOITATION OF SEVEN HUNDRED MILLION TONS OF GARA DJEBILET ORE OVER SIXTY-YEAR PERIOD. IN PRACTICE, HOWEVER, EVEN IF MOROCCAN RATIFICATION OF BORDER AGREEMENT CLEARED WAY FOR MIXED COMPANY TO EXPORT ORE VIA ATLANTIC/MOROCCAN SEAPORT, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT ALGERIANS WOULD GIVE PRIORITY TO DOMESTIC USE OF THIS ORE AND LET JOINT PROJECT LAG BEHIND. PARKER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSTRUCTION, IRON, RAILROADS, EXPLOITATION (NATURAL RESOURCES)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ALGIER02725
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740356-0123
From: ALGIERS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741256/aaaabvrw.tel
Line Count: 52
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 1
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: ALGIERS 2724
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 JUN 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <20 MAR 2003 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALGERIAN PLANS FOR GARA DJEBILET
TAGS: EIND, ELTN, AG
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005